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THE GROWTH OF INDIVIDUALISM:

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## THE GROWTH OF INDIVIDUALISM.

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OUR subject has reference to the history of the Race. It involves the past trials and present position of the Human Family, and has an intimate connexion with its future aspirations and fortunes. It is, the distinct recognition by some governments, of individual rights denied almost from the beginning of human authority; the disenthralment of THE INDIVIDUAL, in mind, body and conscience, from the oppression which had almost crushed him; the gradual growth, in the State, of the man—each individual man, as a being whose rights are worthy of preservation and protection; the acknowledgment that it is not beneath the dignity of government, but is its rightful duty, to guard from injury every subject, and to secure to each his share in the dignities and honors, as well as the burthens and responsibilities of the State; the increased respect paid to the man as contrasted with the ancient idea of the mass; in one phrase, THE GRADUAL GROWTH OF INDIVIDUALISM.

This thought, not yet fully developed, is at the basis of all rational improvement in government. Without its distinct recognition, there can be no really progressive movement. The equality of all before the law is the grandest idea in government, and is the necessary corollary of that comforting truth of Religion, the equality of all before God. Thus, Christianity—in giving man a priceless individual value, in teaching him that he was created by God, is responsible to God and will be judged by God, in establishing, by means of

conscience, a new and *personal* relation between man and his Creator, and in tracing all to a common origin and holding all to a common accountability—is, in truth, the parent of Individualism, and promises to work out a double redemption—saving Mankind finally, from the twin oppression of Sin and Tyranny. Before Christianity was revealed, this thought was not grasped; and Ancient Civilization, lacking Moral Power, lacked alike that spirituality which was reserved for a later period, and that true equality in government which is now advancing to perfect development, with the increasing spread of Christian principles.

Ancient History abundantly illustrates this remark. Turning to hoary and imbecile INDIA, and viewing its firm Force-fixed organism—the iron-walled castes which offered liberty to one class and slavery to the rest; the system's claimed and conceded Divinity of creation; the abjectness of worship which the Brahmins wrung from the obedient mercenaries, the helpless tradesmen and the debased slaves; the polygamic practices which the lifeless religion sanctified; the enforced ignorance of the governed class; and the fearful vices which corrupted the rulers and the ruled—we see nothing of that brotherhood in Man, before which no such absolute inferiority of rights in some, and absolute superiority of rights in others, is possible to be maintained. Formed to aggrandize the possessors of power at the expense of its subjects, it maintained its unnatural position by the powerful weapons of Superstition and Force, and by its intended debasement of the mass and its degradation of the individual, gradually effected that mental and moral torpor which yet overspreads that Nation, lying now as then, unmoved by the shocks of centuries, and sternly, sullenly content in its despairing degradation. *There* INDIVIDUALISM never had a home, and men toiled in ignorance, and carelessness, of the approaching day.

The records of EGYPT show us little improvement. Its more active life, its less enervating climate, its more frequent contests, its unwearied industry and its less persistent pas-

siveness developed one feature which the gloom of India does not present; but this was a modification, not so much of the enslavement of the people, as of the relative rights of the governing classes. The people were yet subjects—victims. And the splendor of portions of Egyptian History, its conquests over nature, its gorgeous temples, its massive and enduring pyramids, are proofs only of the loyalty and moral enervation of the subjects, not of the wisdom and kindness of the rulers. Old Egypt also, must be associated with a denial of the dignity of Labor to which it owes most of its fame, and with the degradation of the millions who inscribed upon wondrous and eternal monuments the records of the nation's achievements, and the names of its most glorious defenders.

PHENICIA was a nation of Laborers, and first emancipated Labor from the severest of the penalties under which it had suffered. Its people, from roving pirates became established traders, and carried the works of ingenious artizanship over the wide waste of waters to the limits of the then known world. In this pursuit of the quiet occupations of peace, which required the constant plowing of distant Oceans, they increased their knowledge, gained new ideas of government, obtained new aspirations, inhaled a hatred of restraint, developed a bold and enterprising spirit which could not brook the mean restraints of priestly or royal power, and created conceptions which, however feeble when compared with the recent past, and however imperfectly shadowed forth in their institutions, should be acknowledged as theirs, and properly traced, as direct results, to their industrial habits, so different from the brutal conquests, bloody wars and destructive tendencies which absorbed the energies and marked the course of most of Heathen nations. There was developed the germ of that sturdy oak which, nurtured by the MIDDLE CLASS, afterwards overspread the nations and gathered, under its protecting boughs, millions who had long languished for want of its congenial shade. But their religion was barbarous and defiled them: their trade tempted the cupidity of their stronger enemies; and soon the Phœnicians disappeared, having but

feebly illustrated those humanizing maxims whose spirit has shed a peculiar lustre upon Modern times.

In GREECE, appeared a people with a marked taste for arms, an exceeding restlessness of spirit, an intensity of patriotism previously unknown, a then unparalleled strength of feeling, a singular refinement of nature, a wonderful capacity for intellectual improvement, an absorbing love of the beautiful in Nature and in Art, and with ardent longings after Liberty, which they never understood and never obtained. One of these characteristics found gratification in constant wars which, sometimes with each other and sometimes with a common enemy, exhausted the contestants, and at last sunk the nation in its grave. Another was manifested in a discontent with the present, an aversion to indolence, and in ceaseless aspirations after an indefinite better. Another made them willing sacrifices for the good of the State, converting weak women into heroes, and nerving warriors to do and dare aught required for their country's safety or glory. Another gave directness to their efforts, unity to their purposes, and power to their resolves. Another quickened the development, and sharpened the perception, of beauties in moral feelings which their grosser predecessors had never realized or enjoyed; and found fitting expression in a milder and less terrifying form of religion than had preceded. Another burst forth in those grand achievements which have inseparably connected the Grecian name with much that is attractive, inviting and ennobling in Literature, and have given their great masters the reputation of having, of all Heathens, made the nearest approach to the discovery of The Truth. Another induced the cultivation of those graceful tastes which furnished appreciative admirers to those matchless works of Art, whose surpassing excellence is yet a never-failing source of keenest pleasure. And another was the remote, but effective cause of those repeated grasps, those terrible throes, amid which, it was hoped, some plan of deliverance would be appointed to suffering, but aspiring Humanity. Of such were the components of the Grecian character. Their institutions, more liberal and more

nearly individual than any which had gone before, called forth the powers of the CLASS, rather than of the MAN. The State was adored. The individual was subordinated. Political duties were ranked as the highest—higher than those of Religion, to which the State was preferred, and whose laws those of the State absorbed. Thus, while the State was elevated, the individual, in person and mind and conscience, was subjected, not to a few as hitherto, but to the aggregation of all—yet subjected, stripped of his privileges, his rights, his prerogatives. And in Greece, brilliant, immortal, glorious Greece, the home of sages, the nursery of philosophy, the birth-place of gentle Art, the venerable home of venerated men, we see no development of that grand thought, beyond which in sublimity only one other, its twin, was ever entrusted to the care of fallen, erring man.

In ROME is presented an evidence of the power of unquailing energy, devoted to material conquests. The Roman's theatre was the actual, not the ideal world. He revelled in the excitement of battle, and was never satiated with the pleasures of victory. His country was his God; her service his glory. He swept over the earth, overthrowing kingdoms, razing cities, devastating colonies, blotting out nations. He made his Capital the Mistress of the World, and forced through her streets, in galling chains, the chiefs of her conquered peoples. He made the Roman name known at the ends of the earth, and its utterance became his shield against oppression. He conquered the country as well as the people, marking the subjugation of the latter by taxes, and the former by monumental works connecting it with the Central City. But while conquering others, the Roman was not himself free. That liberty had always been the liberty of Rulers, and it ultimately became the liberty of One to rule. The duty of the others was obedience. Their religion could not relieve them from this position. It was of human creation, was sustained by human laws, was dependent upon the State, was controlled by the State and was served by officers of the State. It spread superstition among the people, binding men to



earthly things instead of lifting them to heavenly, and neglecting that government of self, without which no man or people ever rose to the enjoyment of actual liberty. It did not come between the strong and the weak, but permitted the father to sell or murder his child, and the master his slave. It did not bridle human passions or check human vices. And soon corruption overspread all classes. Wealth, Irreligion and Slavery consumed the former conquerors of the world; and the fierce Barbarians of the North won an easy victory over the enervated frames, broken spirits, and corrupted natures of the last of Heathen Nations. Rome, with its thoroughly centralized government, followed in the wake of others who sought to tread where Human Principles pointed. It buried Man under imperial magnificence; and both fell in a common ruin. But while all were humiliated, they were not destroyed; for amid the darkest gloom of that fearful period, when Man's powers for good had been fully tested and had wholly failed, the Day-star arose, and the CHRIST, long predicted, came, promising the elevation of Man, the destruction of his oppressor, and the regeneration of the world from the thralldom of passion, ignorance and vice.

Such, in brief, was Ancient Civilization, in its relation to Individualism. It possessed no law of right and wrong. It knew not God or the worship due Him. Of necessity, it was ignorant of the regard due to Man, who was created in His image. It embodied human ideas, but lacked those Divine Truths which alone can give lasting life and fadeless glory to a nation. It accomplished human purposes, but fell far short of those grand conceptions which were beyond the reach of unaided man. It, for a time, seemed to elevate the few, though at the expense of the many, but at last brought all to a common level in the dust: for, all connected with it—whether as Priests at the altar, Emperors in the palace, Philosophers in the Academy, Orators in the forum, Tradesmen in the marts, Senators in the Capitol or Citizens in their homes—all, the purest and wisest and greatest of them, wandered in dark valleys, whose gloom they could not penetrate.



They perceived dimly, so dimly that they could never grasp, the object of their search, and at last, in ignorance of its actual existence, they fell headlong under the weight of their manifold errors, follies and crimes—the issue of that Religious system which chained the many in debasement, conferred upon the few only the right to liberty, connived at the spread of slavery, established combats in which man was slain for sport, destroyed the moral sensibility, weakened the domestic feelings and stimulated the worst passions of the people, and degraded woman, sensualized man, and finally humiliated all. Man, polluted, degraded, despised in Rome, was yet to rise; but not by man. To the Maker of all, must we look for the redemption of all. Thus expecting, we turn a few more of the wondrous pages on which are recorded God's doings with His creatures.

In falling, the Romans gave two elements with which the new civilization was to be, in part, constructed. In conquering, the Barbarian tribes contributed also two—their characteristics of personal independence and individual attachment. Those of the Romans, were the Municipal system and the Christian church, which, at the close of the fourth century, had become a corporate body, with a complete government. Our attention, at present, will be more particularly with the latter. We have seen in the Heathen Religion, the causes of the downfall of Heathen Civilization. We will find in the Christian Religion, the causes of that wonderful prosperity, and that glorious liberty which later nations have secured. In this, we do not undervalue the influence exerted by the great political convulsions of the period to which we refer, but behind them all is to be recognized that influence which penetrated society, and gave tone and direction to its combinations. As Heathenism corrupted the world. Christianity purified it, by changing the motives to action, by modifying the opinions, improving the morals, and elevating the aspirations of the people. Yet this also had its conflicts, but, unlike Man's law, it conquered.

The Christian faith, properly understood and practised,

would have at once redeemed the world from the folly and wickedness in which it had long been plunged. But its agents were men, and they often failed to meet the necessities of the times. This law of Love was a sweet sound to the multitudes who, and whose ancestors, had for ages suffered under the law of Force. But it was not a sweet sound to rulers, whose pride it would subdue, whose cruelty it would stay, whose avarice it would check, whose anger it would quell, whose revenge it would proscribe, and whose favorite indulgences it proclaimed as sure to be punished hereafter with ceaseless penalties. Moreover, the prevalence of this law involved change in domestic customs, reforms in domestic institutions, modifications in internal policy. But change involved risk to permanency. Hence, when the new Religion had so far prevailed as to attract attention, it was viewed with hostility, but with a hostility modified by an expressed contempt for the flippantly-termed "outburst of fanaticism"—a convenient mode, not yet extinct, of accounting for, by sneering at, all new thoughts whose existence and agitation are offensive to the non-progressive members of society. Despised by those in power, Christianity slowly made its way among the lowly, the unpretending, teaching them priceless secrets not known before, not taught elsewhere, opening exhaustless fountains of consolation, reforming dissolute lives and directing anxious, beating hearts in those paths which lead to contentment here, to glory hereafter. Soon the number of the professors of the Christian faith increased, and extended from the lower to the higher walks of life. Then, Heathenism took alarm. Its priests feared for their livelihood—its retainers for their places—its advocates for their supremacy. Bitter hate arose; and ere long, biting persecutions visited those Christians who could not, and would not, renounce their glorious faith. The secular arm was outstretched—not to save—but to strike; and numerous, worthy, devoted were its victims. But human power could not reach, or remedy the disorder. It spread. Persecution purified the ranks of believers. It intensified the devotion of the steadfast. It made their heroism sublime.

It developed in its victims a nobleness of resolve, a purity of purpose, which aroused sympathy in friends, and extorted admiration from foes. It raised Christians above the ordinary level of men; and in making them superior to human suffering, proved the claim that their religion was, indeed, from God. The persecution wholly failed in its purpose. The Church was not to be overthrown by violence, by Force. These weapons had hitherto laid low all the enemies of Heathen Rome; but against Christianity they were powerless.

The Christians persevered, teaching their doctrines, practicing their holy precepts, and amazing a corrupt and decaying world with their consistent, lovely life. In time, they became a large class in the empire. Ultimately, the persecution was stayed, the Christians were allowed to re-assemble for worship in the buildings they had formerly occupied, and all exceptions against them were removed. Shortly the Emperor became a Christian, and took under his protection what he defined to be the church—a position far more dangerous to its integrity than the frowns and hatred of his predecessors. The Imperial Government confirmed the Bishops in their sees, and recognized their authority; whereupon the Bishops, strengthened by the civil arm, exalted their offices, extended their powers and magnified their dignity. The government of the church was modeled from that of the State; and below the Bishops were placed various grades of subordinate officers, with the laity divided into various ranks possessing varying privileges. New influences entered the church; and soon a council, held about the year 300, declared that freedmen whose former owner was living, were debarred from promotion to any rank of the clergy. A tone of contempt for inferiors, runs through its canons, showing how the church had lost its spirituality, how fearfully it had already yielded to the blandishments of the worldly-powerful, and how the liberty it then enjoyed was rather the liberty “to scheme, to quarrel and to oppress, than the higher liberty to endure, to forbear and to rest.” The church soon became torn with dissensions, which continued to rage, though met by some

earnest spirits with words of quiet, sober remonstrance. Old controversies were revived. New controversies arose. And the Christian world was kept in perpetual antagonism. In one of these contests, one party declared for the liberty of the individual to make his own creed; the other advocated the power of the church to form doctrine for all to believe. The latter prevailed, assisted by the influence of the Emperor; and another step was taken toward the same centralization in the church as was prevailing in the State. But *this* centralization was destined to be greater than *that*, for it was to overshadow the Empire. Ambrose fought this fight and conquered—exalting the ecclesiastical above the temporal. But the liberty he gained was for his order, not the subject-classes whose liberty was rather diminished than increased by the newly-extended dominion of the Bishops. The tendency to centralization continued, and soon a Council declared the inequality of the Bishops, erected another and far more exclusive order, and elevated the Roman and the Constantinopolitan Bishops above the rest. Siricius, recently elected to the former, enforced the decree, and exercised and consolidated the pre-eminence awarded to his office. The celibacy of the clergy was established for the double purpose of effecting by it their isolation from the people, that the people might be more securely controlled, and of making the clergy, by separating them from their inferiors, more dependent upon their superiors. Under the influence of a policy of which this is an example, clerical indulgences reached such an extreme, that scourging was by no means an unusual mode of punishment, and with this condition of morals among the clergy, what must have been the condition of the laity? The existence of these disorders was urged by some as proof of necessity for a more vigorous government; whilst by others, as a reaction against centralization, Monasticism was originated. The monk, in his retirement, was at first liberated from the excessive watchfulness of the clergy, and was independent of the priesthood. Such was the oppression of centralization that many devoted themselves to monastic life.

But soon *their* dream vanished. The monastery was invaded by unhallowed footsteps. Force became an essential of its government, and the liberty pursued for centuries, again disappeared as a phantom. Centralization prevailed among the Roman Christians, and liberty was virtually abandoned. The rulers of the church became as oppressive as those of the empire; and the Northmen came to dethrone both. We know how the ponderous blows of Alaric curdled the blood in the veins of the Emperors—how “the blasts from the North covered the earth and the seas with gloom; how, as the tempest rose and the ocean heaved beneath it, the ebb of centralization began; and how, in place of an unbroken dominion, there appeared from beneath the waters, the peaks and jutting lands upon which Liberty would one day be enthroned.” Likewise, but not so markedly, did they disturb the Religious Centralization which overshadowed the church. The Northern Christians aroused the Roman Christians from their lethargy, having brought with them the principle of the PROMINENCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL, whose protection, in contrast with the Roman idea of the prominence of the State, was the great object of the Northern codes. But this influence proved temporary, and soon signs are visible of a tendency to return to as vigorous anti-Individualism as the church had assumed under Constantine. The inferior clergy were deprived of the power to choose the superior; while the superior retained the power of choosing the inferior. Then the church formally denied the “rights of individual reason,” and claimed the right to persecute for heresy. The church also early deprived the laity of any influence in its government, and claimed for the clergy the exclusive power to study and decide upon all theological questions. It became, in time the defender of religious and civil despotism. Not at all, was it the exponent of individual Liberty. It often defended the people against the bad government of their rulers; but when “any step was proposed to be taken to establish a system of permanent institutions, which might effectually protect liberty from the invasions of power in general, the church always ranged itself



on the side of despotism." Despotie in its organization, having condemned free inquiry and shown contempt for individual reason, what more natural for the chiefs of such an establishment than to array its power with those who, sympathizing with it in religious opinions, held the strong places of the earth, and were capable of adding to its stores and increasing its importance?

The principles indicated as having governed the Church, gradually grew in strength; and some were added to meet emergencies. The grossest abuses followed; and when the resurrection of the modern mind came, the church essayed to trample upon it—to re-inter it, and to make still more dismal and revolting, the black and dreary despotism which had been erected upon its grave. In this it failed. It had departed from the peaceful spirit of the Gospel it professed to teach. It had set at naught sacred, eternal principles. It had attempted to destroy, when it should have assisted the growth of, the earnest aspirations after coming good. More than this: It placed itself between the anxious spirit and its God, requiring that all their converse should be through its priests. It instituted auricular confession, that terrible engine of oppression, invented that through it the priest, informed of the heart-secrets, might be made the more absolute master of the man. It inflicted upon him severe penances, as though physical suffering was the proper atonement for spiritual transgression. It divested the man of all his attributes within its reach, and conferred them upon the church. It deprived him of all means of spiritual improvement, save in the narrow mode of its appointment. It condemned all individuality of opinion. It claimed infallibility for its judgments, tolerating no exceptions to its decrees. It invented imposing ceremonies, gorgeous forms, attractive rituals, to captivate the Barbarians and please the ignorant, superstitious masses—ceremonies and forms and rituals, under whose magnificence were buried, as all formalism is sure to bury, the simplicity and vitality of religion. It seized the man in its iron arms, and squeezed money out of him, or consigned him to perdition.



It enveloped the man in the thing. It made permission to commit crime, and immunity from punishment for crime. a matter of barter, and filled its coffers to overflowing, by the violation of the most sacred precepts. It coldly, designedly, murderously, built itself—a huge, overshadowing, desolating despotism—upon the ruins of Man's Personality. Such was the vast corporation—the vast, soulless corporation, as it presented itself to the view of the men of the Sixteenth Century. It had become so, step by step. One by one, those monstrous claims had been made, insisted on, and wrung from an oppressed people—a people, however, not yet so schooled to oppression as to be beyond indignation at its enormities. This indignation ensued, having spread over many nations; and at length the time arrived, for the battle between the Champions of the Church and the Champions of Humanity. Germany—part of that portion of it on which the Roman soldiery had never trod in triumph, the birth-place of the virtuous, home-loving, woman-respecting, liberty-claiming Teutons, who furnished the “regenerating element in Modern Europe”—was the fitting theatre for this grand conflict, big with the fate of millions. The contest we need not describe. All know it. All, also, know its glorious issue—how the first well-aimed, well-struck blow was given to a grasping and tyrannical Hierarchy—how a conflict was begun which is not ended, and will not be, until Man be everywhere freed from civil and religious oppression—how philanthropists rejoiced, and greedy, bloated churchmen mourned, over the first victory of the long-vanquished—and how the Protestantism of Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli and Calvin spread over neighboring nations—how it broke fetters from thought—how it laid the foundations of large, free and prosperous empire—how it first sundered the firmly-forged chains of Religious Despotism—how it rescued Religion from the false interpretation of the corrupt and designing, and made it accessible to all through The Book which contains the development of its doctrines—how it broke the artificial barriers with which a cunning church had separated Man from his Maker—and how

distinctly it enunciated those never-dying truths which, having their origin in the Bible and their basis in the excellence of God's design and the completeness of His work, are destined to regenerate the world, and drive Wrong back to the dark den in which it had its birth. Thus, by mighty men, through a mighty Revolution, and by giant efforts, was rescued from unhallowed purposes, the Church of God, whose high destiny it was and is, to be an important instrument in the deliverance of Man from the depravity of earth to the glory of Heaven. May its Ministers always realize the importance of this mission, and their responsibility in it; and never may they flag in their fidelity to this great cause, or in their efforts to effect this matchless achievement!

The noble principles enunciated by the Reformers, were the nourishment which suffering mankind needed. They filled the public want, and promised to create the strength which would ultimately give deliverance. But everywhere, their old enemy resisted their growth; and the old weapon, Force, was unsheathed to drive back the new invasion. Bloodshed followed; and, amid deep internal convulsions, mutually exhausting efforts and rivers of martyrs' blood, in too many nations Liberty was again chained and buried beneath the triumphant tread of the heartless tyrant. Pursued by a remorseless Power, and sometimes betrayed by irresolute friends, the Reform ceased its rapid progress, and whole nations relapsed into sullen hopelessness. There they lie to-day, and we need make no further reference to Continental Europe. Without material exception, it sleeps in chains. It has had spasmodic wakings. But the Church and the Crown yet hold it in their brutal grasp. Over all those fair fields, MAN pines—the ruler, in Church and State, grows fat, corrupt, fiendish. This will some day end; and terrible, without a parallel, will be the avenging horrors of that day. We need not seek to portray them.

But for one bright page, we might close the book of European History. Briefly interpreting it, we shall turn from the painful recollections of the past to the substantial joys of

the present, and the pleasant anticipations of the future. The bright page is, of course, the history of ENGLISH INSTITUTIONS, which proved, in many a critical period, the impassable barrier Despotism could not overcome—which often saved liberty in Europe from utter overthrow—and which, though imperfect, have done a great work, of which the friends of Human Liberty, and we especially, have no right to be ignorant, and to which we have no right to be insensible. We speak not in commendation of every act of the English government. We could do that of no government. Nor of every feature of its Institutions. We could do that of no government. But of the general usefulness of their liberal system in the progressive development of Individualism. In connexion with the growth of their Institutions, and as essential to the proper appreciation of them, as well as our own, we must briefly refer to the various people who have contributed to the formation of the English nation. The Celts were bold warriors, were without fortified towns, and were divided into numerous independent tribes, having many kings and petty rulers. They were Druids in Religion, and their priests were almost the only civil magistrates. With the Romans came the division of the country into townships, each possessing powers of self-government, taxation and election of Senators—the beginning of that municipal freedom and self-rule which has distinguished English civilization, and is its vital spirit. The Saxons brought an aristocracy of wealth. Each township had its lord and its chief officer, who was elective—elected its representative to the courts of the hundred and shire—regulated its own police—and was bound “to keep watch and ward.” The hundred court was held monthly, and the County courts twice a year, from which there was an appeal to the Supreme Court—an aristocratic body presided over by the king and attended by the Bishops and Earls. Every member of the commonalty was bound to place himself in dependence upon some man of rank. The Saxon Ceorls were personally free, were legal witnesses, had certain political rights, and could become

thanes. The Saxon Thralls were in a state of slavery; and criminals who could not pay their fines, were liable to be reduced to that condition. Thus, the democratic and aristocratic elements entered largely into the Saxon polity—the latter prevailing. The system of the Danes was substantially the same. And while the Saxon nobles were beginning seriously to menace the independence of the Crown and the freedom of the people, the Normans subdued the island, and ruled it with an iron hand. They established new tenures for land, introduced new divisions of race and class, confiscated and divided among themselves the greater part of the lands of the conquered, rejected as servile and barbarous the English language, filled the high offices in Church and State with men of foreign birth, and placed themselves upon the necks of their despised victims. While William the Conqueror thus aggrandized his followers, he was careful to strengthen the throne by introducing the Feudal system, modified so as to make himself the supreme lord of all the land, and as such requiring an oath of fealty from each land-holder, to prohibit sub-infeudation, and to scatter the nobles and thus diminish the probabilities of rebellion. He enlarged the jurisdiction of the royal tribunal, and contracted that of the baronial courts. He discouraged, by severe penalties, the private warfare which the Feudal system had elsewhere encouraged; and he established his authority upon a firmer footing than any cotemporary monarch in Europe—in his anxiety to strengthen the throne, weakening alike the nobles and the people, and thus, in the future, necessitating that union of those two powers, elsewhere hostile, which finally resulted in the diminution of the royal prerogatives, the comparative independence of the other orders, and the beginning of English Liberty.

Under the severe legislation established by William, and maintained by his successors, up to John, the condition of the people became pitiable in the extreme. Of the two millions who inhabited the island at the commencement of the Thirteenth Century, nearly one-half were in a state of slavery—

either *villeins regardant*, who were attached to certain lands and passed with them, or *villeins in gross*, who were bought and sold, and passed from master to master, without respect to land. The latter villeinage involved an obligation of perpetual service which only the consent of the master could dissolve, created an incapacity of acquiring except for the master's benefit, allowed the master to alienate the person of the slave in the same manner as other property, descended from parent to child, and gave the master an arbitrary power of punishment, in which the life of the slave was inadequately guarded. Slaves "knew not in the evening what they were to do in the morning, but they were bound to do whatever they were commanded." They were always liable to chastisement and imprisonment, and to be sold and separated from their families. At one time the law provided that if a male villein belonging to one lord, married a female villein belonging to another lord, their children were equally divided between the two slave-owners. Slaves were carried to Denmark and Ireland and elsewhere, and sold; and "into Saxon hands the price was paid for Saxon peasants." Such was the pitiable condition of the English peasantry but six centuries ago! Our Saxon forefathers early acknowledged the cruelty, the inhumanity, the wrongfulness of such a relation; and in this same century, offered facilities for the emancipation of slaves, while they placed obstacles in the way of an increase in their number. Among the obstacles were these, named by Creasy: A lord might enfranchise his villein, and the law inferred enfranchisement from many acts, such as the lord's vesting the ownership of lands in the slave, or accepting feudal homage from him, or entering into a sealed obligation with him, or pleading with him in an ordinary action. There were also many modes of constructive enfranchisement, such as the villein's remaining unclaimed a year and a day in a privileged town. The burden of proof always lay upon the lord, and villeinage could only be proved in one of two ways: either by showing that the slave's ancestors had been the property of the claimant and those through whom he deduced title, or



that he had confessed his villeinage in a court of justice. But if the alleged villein could prove that himself, or one of his ancestors through whom villeinage was claimed, had been born out of wedlock, he was liberated. For the law held an illegitimate child *nullius filius*, and, of course, unable to inherit the condition of villeinage—a rational rule, far more defensible than that of *partus sequitur ventrem*. Thus, with the commencement of the common law of the complete English nation, we find it providing means for the gradual and ultimately certain extinction of slavery, which was finally effected, to the lasting honor of the English people, and of those English judges who, having too few imitators in our day, hedged up, by their decisions, the way of the claimant, and bent the whole power of the law to the relief of the weak and oppressed, who most needed its protection. The result of the English policy was to assist in the construction of a grand system of Individual Freedom, which has covered with glory the names of those who, in early times, laid broad and deep, its firm foundations; but the harsh and unmanly policy of too many of our American judges, is disgraceful to our position, variant from our principles, and demoralizing to our people—thus threatening to be fatal to the liberties of all.

From William to John, there was no mitigation of the laws enforced by the former—the intermediate Sovereigns having carefully guarded their prerogatives. One hundred and forty years after the Norman Conquest, John ascended the throne. His was exactly the character to provoke the contempt and hostility of a virtuous people. It was also the character to be overcome by the perseverance of a determined people. For he was utterly destitute of high moral qualities, and was as feeble to retain, as William had been powerful to achieve, the supremacy of the Crown. Lingard says that he was full of dissimulation and suspicion; was polluted with meanness, cruelty, perjury and murder; was ambitious and pusillanimous; and was arrogant in prosperity and abject in adversity. History burns with the records of the outrages of the monster against, alike the honor of many private families, his



ecclesiasties, his barons, his peasants and every class of his subjects—outrages which quickly developed throughout the kingdom a deep-seated feeling of hatred, before which he was soon deservedly humbled. The contest to which his policy led, need not be related—how he defied, and then tamely submitted to the Pope—how he sought to detach the clergy from the Opposition, first by intimidation and then by entreaty—how he braved, then supplicated, and then offered to bribe the stern and uncompromising Barons—and how he attempted, by numerous cunning evasions, to avoid affixing the royal seal to *MAGNA CARTA*, whose grant has made the name of Runnymede immortal, and the 15th of June, 1215, one of the most lustrous days in National History. This Charter, which became the bulwark of English liberties, was general in its provisions, defining the extent of the feudal obligation of the Barons and other immediate tenants of the Crown, extending to the sub-vassals the mitigations obtained by the Barons, securing the ancient liberties of cities and boroughs, prohibiting arbitrary imprisonment and arbitrary punishment of any kind, limiting the power of the Crown over the property, as well as the person, of the subject, encouraging trade and those engaged in it, furnishing the germs from which afterwards grew the representative principle embodied in the English Parliament, guaranteeing trial by a jury instead of by one person and that the nominee of the crown, and containing the foundation of the right to the great writ of *Habeas Corpus*. But its grand feature, which was, in Lord Chatham's opinion, "worth all the Classics," was its protection to the personal liberty and the property of all freemen, as given in these words: "No freeman shall be taken, or imprisoned, or be disseised of his freehold, or liberties, or free customs, or be outlawed or exiled, or any otherwise destroyed, nor will we pass upon him nor condemn him, but by lawful judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land. We will sell to no man, we will not deny or defer to any man, either justice or right." Thus completely, and for the first time in the history of earthly governments, was recognized,

what was taught eighteen centuries ago in Judea, the complete equality before the law of every citizen; and was guaranteed the protection of him in his claim to the enjoyment of his Individual Rights. For a mode was established, by which the King could be compelled to respect and obey all the obligations of the Charter, which has been solemnly confirmed by Kings and Parliaments more than thirty times, and has received the addition of important privileges, during the many years of conflict between the King on the one hand and the Barons and People on the other. But, as was said of the Roman, may be said of the English Constitution: "No one man and no one age sufficed for its full production." On the contrary, it was the accretion of many centuries of faithful labor, and the work of many fearless, upright, intelligent and sagacious generations of men.

So thorough has become the importance of the Individual, that the supremacy of law over royal power is now an established rule in England, and every individual has the right to resist an illegal act against his person or property, by whomsoever attempted. The right of Freedom of Debate in Parliament, and the immunity of the representative from all answer elsewhere, long contested by the King, were ultimately wrested from him, as also the Freedom of the Press and the personal Freedom of legislators—valuable principles without which free government is impossible, and every invasion of which, upon however specious pretexts, should be sternly resisted. Parliament also wrung from the King and his Council, the right to determine the qualifications of their members, to regulate the right of suffrage among the people, to check the direct interference of the Crown in the elections, and, in various ways, to protect the nation from the grasping tendencies of Royalty. It was made illegal to raise and keep a standing army in time of peace, without consent of Parliament. Trials for treason—once a common mode of destroying men odious to the King—were surrounded with peculiar safeguards. Judges were made independent of the Crown by appointment for life and removal in a specified

manner only for cause shown; and the King was estopped in his efforts to overawe Courts (as James had memorably attempted with Lord Coke), and to drive them to the denial of justice. And thus amid perpetual controversy, sometimes amid sanguinary conflicts and the dethronement and beheading of tyrannical monarchs, the brave people of England have risen from an oppressed, down-trodden mass, to a position which no other Europeans enjoy; and they have given an impetus to the cause of free institutions everywhere, which will be felt to the latest period of time. In this country, much ignorance prevails concerning the safeguards which surround the liberty of an Englishman; and much prejudice exists against aught which has an English origin or bears the English name. But such prejudices, however natural to be felt, and however improperly sought to be perpetuated, are unworthy of an intelligent people, and will be dissipated, the more generally become known the facts, that English Institutions were the basis on which ours were built, and that our Common Law had its origin and partial development among the baronial castles, the free towns, the unpolished society of the early English. The civilization of England is one of Liberty. Its people are more imbued with the spirit of Liberty than any other in Europe; and when the freedom of that Continent was threatened to be destroyed twice in the personal recollection of many—first by Napoleon with his brilliant centralized government, and next by Nicholas with his ponderous Autocracy, England was the nucleus of the league which drove back the invader, defeated his purposes, and saved Individualism from an early and untimely grave. For all this, our thanks are due to that great power which, with its many errors, with its inequalities, with its oppressions and with its wrongs, is the repository of European liberty, the hope of Europe's regeneration, and the breakwater upon which the waves of despotism have spent themselves in vain. Its institutions are eminently individual in their character; and its flag waves over not a single slave, over no man who is not, in his right to life, liberty and property, the equal of

every other. They have elevated the man, surrounded him with securities, given him substantial certainties, protected him in the enjoyment of what he has, guarded his family and property from the hands of the spoiler, and placed below him, above him, around him, the guardian influences of a liberal polity—a polity which the first William insidiously sought forever to make impossible, but for which the falsehood, treachery, avarice and tyranny of James and Charles compelled a conflict, and which the firmness and wisdom of Hampden, the learning and integrity of Selden, Coke and Glanville, the address and eloquence of Pym, the patience and fortitude of Elliot, the courage and impetuosity of Cromwell, and the sturdy principles of an aroused, outraged and indignant people painfully evolved and inaugurated, and which the blood of a host of willing, glorying martyrs has cemented, and made, we trust, as permanent as the principles it seeks to perpetuate, and as lastingly brilliant as the bold White Cliffs of that sea-girt coast—those glittering battlements which ceaseless waves have washed and howling storms have beaten for centuries, which first greet the gaze and rejoice the heart of the returning, and last linger in the vision of the departing voyager, and which have been transmuted, by the alchemy of eight centuries of toilsome experiment, into joyous, radiant Watch-towers of Liberty. In church, as in State, England fails equally in the complete development of Individualism. But let us hope that as greater abuses have yielded to the pressure of the truth, ere long those remaining will also vanish, displaying a governmental structure which, enduring for ages, will constantly grow in usefulness, beneficence and glory.

Thus, wherever we look—in Asia, Africa or Europe—we see much to sadden, much to remind us that MAN is still rising, not having yet risen from his long and deep debasement. The process is slow and painful. For its nearest approach to completion, we must leave those old and blood-stained fields, polluted by Force, contaminated with fraud, soiled by crimes, and covered, mountain-high, with the innocent slain. We

must turn to a virgin soil, dedicated by a new people to the beautiful experiment of showing that it is possible for men to be brothers.

Some centuries ago, numerous brave, bold, conscientious men left England and the Continent, to seek homes in a new hemisphere, where they might, unmolested by jealous government, unawed by tyrant officials, develop the radical truth proclaimed to the world by the sturdy Republicans of the Netherlands, that "Liberty must not be a boon of the government, but that government must derive its rights from the governed;" where they might, without danger to estate or life, believe, assert and practically enforce the nervous declaration of Algernon Sidney, that "the liberties of Nations are from God and nature, not from kings." Bearing with them an intense love of liberty and an earnest desire to be free, they came to an unbroken forest untouched by old and corrupt institutions, among savage Indians without long-confirmed despotic government, with its train of deeds of Violence and Wrong. They sailed to a land which was then, substantially, as it came from the hands of its Creator—pure, unsullied—a *tabula rasa* from which there were no marks to be erased and on which all marks would at once become visible. They came from under the rule of the Oppressor, intent upon founding a government under which no tyrant should ever lift his horrid front, no legal inequalities of class should exist, no wrongdoing should be sanctified, no right should be denied; but under which MAN might have a worthy theatre for the full and untrameled development of his moral and intellectual endowments. With these high resolves, these noble purposes, those Puritans, Presbyterians and Cavaliers left their ancient, and approached their future homes. They were, most of them, men of Education, and all had brave, honest hearts. They had read how grinding had been the hierocracy of India, how hopeless the mixed despotism of Egypt, how fitful the liberty of Greece, how ephemeral that of Rome, and how Man had long and vainly struggled on the Continent with a centralized State and a centralized Church above him. They



knew how hardly won had been the precious concessions obtained by their courageous Fathers, and how repeated had been the efforts of the rulers to revoke the privileges granted. Some of them had been imprisoned in the Tower for too great boldness of speech. Others had refused to pay the ship-money and been wearied with long and iniquitous persecutions. Others had aided in the dethronement of Charles, and at the Restoration, had been compelled to flee their country. Others had refused to pay their tithes to the Church, and to their sorrow discovered that *their* home was not the home of Religious Liberty. And others, who had not personally suffered, had been told these wrongs until they were a familiar tale; and had religiously sworn, as they knelt by their patriotic, Liberty-loving mothers, an eternal enmity to every form of Oppression over the mind or body of Man. Of such was the early emigration from Europe to America, men trained to hate—not merely to dislike and delicately disapprove, but in their deepest heart to hate—the tyrant and his deeds—men raised up by God to lay the foundation-stones on which the first great Temple to Liberty was to be erected. And well, almost worthily of their Guardian Spirit, they did their work. But not at once was it accomplished, though soon it was begun—for in healthy hardship they sorely spent their long apprenticeship. The first trenches were dug, deep and wide, into their mother earth. But slowly the ground was cleared, the spot prepared, the materials gathered. The workmen studied each his duty, the architects carefully prepared their plans, the people thoughtfully amassed the necessary means. All—the order of the scene, the calmness of the principals, the determination, industry and single-mindedness of those engaged, indicated a full knowledge of their position, and gave evidence that here no ordinary men were gathered, that here no ordinary work was in progress. Evil rulers at their old homes had pursued them into their wilderness-fastnesses, with harsh and unconstitutional legislation. Our Fathers were then law-abiding men, and had confidence in their brethren who composed the English people. They



did not rashly meet the crisis. They protested against the Wrong, and petitioned for a redress of grievances. They avowed their loyalty to the Highest Authorities of the Realm, but asked those Authorities not to remove the old and cherished landmarks of the Constitution. Modestly but firmly, and with marvellous skill and ability, they addressed successively the Throne, the Parliament, the People. They appealed to each, for the repeal of the illegal acts; but England's ear was deaf. Her justice slept. She had espoused the wrong. She had refused to retract, and her colonies were free—not yet free in fact, but free in this: that they were strong in the Right, and were favored by Heaven. The tocsin sounded through these beautiful valleys and along these grand towering mountain-tops. The people heard, and obeyed the summons. They sent their best men to a Continental Congress, where, after careful deliberation, prayerful thought and much wise counsel, they *resolved to be Independent*. They appealed to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of their intentions, and to the God of Battles committed the decision of the contest which the Mother had provoked, and which the children could no longer avoid. The conflict ensued, and at last the decisive battle was fought. The Right was triumphant. The weaker had conquered the stronger; and the world was again taught how necessary that Nations should do right before God if they would be strong before men. The enemy departed vanquished. The colonists were in undisturbed possession of their long-beleaguered homes; and now the time had come for the erection of the Temple for which they had been for years preparing. Eventful period! Vitally important undertaking! But there were giants in those days—moral as well as intellectual—and they were equal to their duties. They had read, pondered, and, most of all, felt. They were not theorists merely. They were practical statesmen of great learning, acute perception, enlightened conscience and unsurpassed wisdom. They were not perfect. They did not wholly avoid error. But they wrought marvels, as Europe and America unitedly proclaim.

They addressed themselves, absorbingly, to their task, and well and in the proper place, they firmly fixed every block, where it would best knit the rest, best sustain the whole. In the building, they used, besides the pure granite of their native hills, every stone which had been laboriously hewn by their Fathers from the flinty thrones of the Plantagenets, the Tudors and the Stuarts. And for the "head of the corner," they used *that* stone, of which we read that other builders once rejected it. Massive, but graceful, the Temple rose to completion, sixty-nine years ago, when, as it was surmounted with the Cap of Liberty, the Nation was struck with its fine proportions, its elegant dimensions, the wonderful fitness of its parts. As it was on the grand gala-day of the Union, when its adoption was celebrated by a grateful and joyous people, it is this day—as bright, as beautiful. Long may it continue to fill our admiring gaze, and never may it fall before the violence, the anger, the degeneracy of the sons of its builders.

In their deliberations, our Fathers early encountered a great difficulty—the unfortunate prevalence, in most of the States, of a condition of slavery, which is at variance with the declared principles of our government. All those wise and good men lamented its existence, and sincerely regretted the apparent impossibility of its prompt removal. They, however, relieved themselves, as far as possible, of all connexion with it, and handed the control of the "institution" and the responsibility for its continuance therein, to the States in which it existed. They carefully and intentionally avoided giving, in the Constitution, any sanction to the idea that man could have a right of property in man, and with an emphasis which cannot be misunderstood, they described as persons those unfortunate beings now claimed, by sectionalism, to be as thoroughly property, *by virtue of the action of the National Constitution*, as the beasts of the field. Even in the rendition clause, the language used applies as well to apprentices as slaves, and contains no recognition of a master's *ownership* in either. Thus the horrible theory that Human

Slavery is recognized by our National Constitution as part of American Institutions, to be as indefinitely extended as American emigration to the Nation's Territories, is overthrown as well by the language of the Constitution as by the well-known wishes and intentions of its framers, and by the Congressional legislation of the period of its adoption. Whatever rights of property masters possess are created and secured by State Law, and are therefore, confined to State limits. The Constitution is not a Slavery-establishing or Slavery-extending instrument. It was framed in an enlarged spirit of liberty, and was intended to confer the blessings of liberty, not the curses of slavery, on all, as far as practicable, within its reach. But while doing this, while protecting, as far as in them lay, the Constitution from being turned into a means for the extension and perpetuation of a monster wrong, and while making it, as far as in them lay, a means for the extension of freedom, its great framers were not authorized, and did not undertake, to settle the details of the relation between the master and his servant. That has been done by the States. With these details we have no especial concern. They have, however, so far modified the natural rights of portions of the residents of this country, as to make it necessary to say, that when we proceed to speak of the guarantees our laws give to INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY, the remarks must always be considered as having exclusive reference to the *unmixed* white Race alone—whose weaker, and more ignorant and debased members were once in as abject slavery in England, as the negroes and the numerous crosses of the negro with the white, are in the South. And not only must these remarks be confined to pure Caucasians; but, to a certain extent, to the whites of the North—since it is too true that in the South many social privileges are seriously modified by the “peculiar institution,” and that poor white laborers, poor white school-teachers, poor white servants and others not connected with the local Aristocracy, have not that adequate protection against personal injuries and even destruction to life, which our government in theory recognizes as

equally the right of all. So restrictive, if not subversive, is the slave "institution" of the rights of portions of the white Race; and so perverting is its influence upon even the course of justice. It is the existence of Human Slavery—the antipode of that INDIVIDUALISM for which we plead—which alone detracts from the sublimity of our Institutions. Sustained by Force, and denying natural rights, it is such as has marked painfully the world's history through the long path we have pursued it—such as has disgraced and destroyed many other governments—such as materially limits our influence for good—such as will set bounds to our National Existence if, in its treatment, we are unfaithful to our religion, our age and our declared principles—such as we hope *will* soon disappear from the face of the earth and as *must* disappear before universal peace and good will among men are finally established. In America as in Europe, grievous oppression still abounds. May more holiness be infused into the counsels of both Continents, and may justice soon be done to all, not withheld from any, bearing the likeness of our God!

As might be inferred from what we have said of the early training and the matured feelings of the men of '76, they were fully aware of the evils inherent in priestcraft as well as kingcraft—and among the earliest-settled of their principles, was the utter repudiation of any union of Church and State. They wished no consolidation of the temporal and spiritual power. They wished no church establishment to eat the substance of the people, and impair the vitality of religion. They wished no religious orders to introduce pride and self-sufficiency among the clergy. They wished no stately magnificence to crush the meekness—a crowning beauty—from the religion of the Lowly Man. And they went beyond the Mother country, and decreed that there should be no established religion in the Republic. After providing that *spiritual* oppression should not subdue the energies of our people and stain our soil with martyrs' blood, our Fathers sought to make *civil* oppression impossible. They placed the Excu-

tive power in one of the people's choosing, gave him a limited tenure of office, and defined his powers so clearly that, if ever exceeded, the act has been of design, not accident. They deprived him of all legislative power, except in conjunction with the Congress of the Nation, in which the "States as corporations and the People as individuals" are represented. They denied him the right, though unfortunately not deprived him of the power, to bring on a state of war, and they lodged that great right in Congress alone. And they so hedged up his way with checks and difficulties, that an Executive cannot do much evil, without a virtual disregard of his oath. The powers of Congress are also accurately defined, and a Supreme Court is established, with a life tenure of office, to hold and adjust the balance between the various branches. Thus the people have protected themselves in limiting the powers of their servants, and have most wisely guarded against the destruction of their liberties.

Voting is a most important civil duty; and upon its intelligent and conscientious discharge, the stability of our institutions depends. Hence, as a security against undue influence upon the Individual, the voting of the people, except in those few States which have not yet fully grasped the idea of the Liberty of the Man, or having grasped it fear to embody it in their legislation, is done by ballot, to the end that the greatest independence of action may be secured, and the poor and weak may be protected from the overawing influence of the wealthy and powerful. On the other hand, the voting of our representatives is done *viva voce*, that the constituent may know whether his sentiments have been represented. The elective franchise is, except in a few of the less progressed States, given to the man, not to his property, as in England. And the right to a seat in our Legislative Assemblies is not confined to certain classes by a property qualification—the idea expressed in June last upon the floor of the National Senate, and there endorsed by sundry members, that no man without the amount of property required in the Constitution of South Carolina, is fit for a legislator, being repudiated by



the mass of the people, as out of harmony with our theory of government.

Our Courts are carefully guarded so as to protect the many and facilitate the dispensing of justice. The English Common Law—"the living vigorous law of a living people"—the law of seven centuries' growth which the men of the Revolutionary period placed as a shield between them and their Home Oppressors—the law of liberty which tolerates no such thing as superiority and inferiority of rights—the law which overbore the Civil Law when it threatened such destruction to English liberties as has everywhere followed its reception—the law which repudiates the slavish maxim of the Institutes that "the will of the Prince has the force of law," and substitutes that other and wiser maxim, "that the King is subject to God and the Law"—this healthy, sturdy law is above all, watching all, protecting all, equalizing all. Every man's home is made sacred, and is protected from the pollution of even an officer's footstep, except in a few specified cases—a precious right which the police of the Continent daily and atrociously violate. The right to the great writ of *Habeas Corpus* has become a most important privilege, and, as intended, protects the individual from all unlawful and indefinite imprisonment—except, indeed, he be incarcerated for alleged contempt of Court, for which our Judges generally claim the right to imprison, without question or interference from any quarter, an alleged but not convicted offender, until they choose to order his release—a claim which, if well founded, gives those officers a dangerous authority, the most absolute in the country, which it is contrary to the genius of our government should be deposited in a single hand, and which, if it has not been, may become here, as it has been elsewhere, the source of much personal wrong from an irritated Judge to an odious or proud-spirited suitor. A well-guarded penal trial is secured to all indicted for crime; which requires distinctness of accusation by the prosecutor, gives the accused the benefit of all presumptions of law, secures publicity of trial and furnishes all the essentials to the com-



plete protection of the MAN from the immense power of the government—essentials which were unknown in Rome and Athens, and are almost unknown on the Continent of Europe, where the presumptions of law are against the prisoner, where the judge is uncontrolled by settled rules of evidence, where he is permitted to subject the accused to rigid examinations, to conceal the offence charged and to refuse to compel the attendance of the defendant's witnesses, and where every artifice which ingenuity can suggest, is used to bear down the accused and unprotected. We have a fair trial before a jury who are required to give a unanimous verdict; and no citizen is excluded, as in England, from the jury-box—a mode of trial, the fairest ever devised, and a most necessary and valuable protection against general injustice. We have no attainder of blood, and visit no man's offences upon his children. We have a written Constitution, the general guardian, which, though threatened to be somewhat changed from its original intention by the violence of party feeling exerted upon judicial officers, we may hope will be spared serious mutilation. We enjoy the benefits of an unfettered, and generally escape the evils of an unlicensed, press. We have the right of free locomotion within the country, of free egress from it and of free regress to it—a privilege that those do not lightly value who know the annoyances of the passport system, and the vile uses to which it is frequently applied. We have perfect protection in our epistolary correspondence; and the mails, secure from such Vandalism as exists in France, are daily freighted with missives of every variety. We have the inestimable liberty of worship, which it cost Englishmen many a perilous conflict to wrest from unwilling hands, and which other nations have fairly earned by blood but have not yet obtained. We have freedom of trading and freedom of producing, either of the fruits of the field or of the cunning of the hand. We have protected the person of the man from debasing and mortifying punishments. We have secured to woman the control and enjoyment of her property; and while elevating her socially,

have given her a legal position she nowhere else occupies. We have subordinated the military to the civil power. We have the invaluable right of petitioning our legislators—a right solemnly guaranteed and generally yielded cheerfully. We have, especially in the North, no peculiarities of social system, to make manual labor disgraceful, to socially and politically debase the poor, and, thus much, to crush the energies and wound the sensibilities of the Man. We have no taxation such as afflicts Europe, nor are the contributions of our people spent in supporting privileged classes, ministering to depraved appetites, or corrupting any portion of the population.

Such are some of our privileges, which, in comprehensiveness and variety, have been equalled by those of no other people. We have all of value in every system which has preceded ours, and we have added much which was only possible to be obtained in a new country, isolated from jealous and powerful neighbors, and separated, by time and distance, from the political centres of the Old World. Our Liberty is not the highest capable of realization. But it is a vast progression upon what has been elsewhere realized. In the opinion of many excellent, sagacious and patriotic men, we are loosening in our hold upon fundamental principles; and are thus endangering the permanency of what we have. If this be so, the fact is another illustration of the tendency of nations to forget in prosperity the virtues which carried them safely and honorably beyond the perils of adversity. And that it is so, is too probably indicated by the recent unparalleled violence in various portions of the country; by the frequent assaults and murders upon the public streets of many of our cities and towns; by the fearful prevalence, every where, of disregard for the personal rights of citizens; by the substitution of the more rapid, but more dangerous, arbitrament of force for that of the law; by the brutal beating of one Congressman in the Senate House by another for words spoken in debate, and the shamefully inadequate punishment of the violator, as well of the privileges of the Sen-

ate as of the laws of the country; and, above all and worse than all, by the vitiated public sentiment which quietly connives at, and even openly commends, the more atrocious of these violations of the spirit of the Constitution and of the foundation-principles of Individual Liberty. We have a "solid embankment of institutions," which it is cheering, inspiring to contemplate—which it would be shameful, dastardly to weaken, by departing from the sublime spirit in which they originated—the love of Individual Freedom, the desire to dignify Man, the anxiety to advance the Human Race. Let that spirit ever animate us; and let that be promptly discountenanced which, however plausibly concealed, aims a blow at the virgin bosom of our American Divinity.

A brief comparison yet claims attention. We have seen what Man was under the lifeless despotisms of Asia and Africa. We have seen how little of good, Greece and Rome brought to those beneath their sway. We have seen how Europe flowed with blood in the protracted, and yet uncompleted struggle between Man and those in authority. We have seen how, under Providence, England troublously obtained the large measure of liberty which, in the progress of events, has been vouchsafed to her. And we have seen what has been accomplished for Man on this Continent, in a period marvellously short, compared with the ages which are past. The review gives us much for thankfulness—not anything for vainglorious boasting. Yet consider the most advanced of Heathen nations, compare the condition of Man in them with his condition in America, and how striking, amazing, appalling the contrast! In Greece or Rome, Man separated from the State, was nothing. He existed in and for the State. He was useful, valuable only as belonging to the State. His rights were worth preserving, only because likely to benefit the State. An intense State-feeling, swallowing up affection for parents, for lover, for wife, for children, almost for self, everywhere prevailed. Patriotism was a Greek or Roman's strongest passion—a patriotism which was thus excessive because destitute of the moral element which came with Chris-

tianity, to subordinate its exercise to high and binding principles. And the man was most honored and most dignified, not when he became wise, virtuous, learned; not when he mastered science, made great discoveries, and explored Nature's mysteries; not when he unravelled Truth, exhorted to purity of life and practised what he exhorted; but he was most honored and most dignified when he was introduced into the citizenship of the State! Such was the Ancient, the Heathen, the Natural, the Human conception of Man's dignity—such their estimate of his value—such their idea of his destiny. They thought citizenship “the highest phase of Humanity,” and classed duty to the State as the highest of earthly obligations. No comment can better show how fearfully the ancient civilization was tainted with earth, how little it knew of Heaven.

Turn to America. In the ages which have intervened between the decay of the Roman and the birth of the American, the true Religion has been revealed. Christianity has come, teaching Man his origin, his duties and his end. It has shown him his individual consequence involved in his individual accountability; and, lifting him from the meshes of government, has planted upon his brow the signet of the Almighty. It views him as a Man, not as a Citizen. It teaches him to demand his privileges because they are his birthright, and to yield others theirs, because they have an equal title. It prescribes his duties to the State, but enjoins that the State shall not receive his adoration, for naught that is earthly is worthy of the worship of an immortal soul. It has created within him deep spiritual wants the Heathen never knew; and in filling them, has lifted him far above the reach of the passions which destroyed Antiquity, infinitely beyond the cravings of the Ancient heart. It leads him from the low instincts of life to the higher; and in fixing his love and duty upon the Great I Am, it has elevated his nature, refined his feelings, purified his heart; and, in making him a worthier man, it has given the State a better citizen than ever gloried in the title of a Roman. His country no longer absorbing

all his feelings and duties, Patriotism—a blind, bigoted, un-reasoning Patriotism—is no longer the sole passion of life. And the Man is now most honored, not when he seeks to “place himself upon a level with the Gods by means of labor, misery and combat;” not when he delights in the use of destructive agencies against his fellows; not when he conquers his country’s enemies and lays waste their homes; not when he merges all other feelings in a burning passion for his country’s glory, and not when he receives the apotheosis of an excited people; but when he conquers himself, suppressing the evil of his nature and drawing forth the good, when he practices virtue and is as a shining light in the world, when he exhibits in his life the beauty of holiness, and is just to others, watchful of himself, dutiful to God. Such is the Modern, the Divine, the Present glorious conception of man’s dignity—such our estimate of his value—such our idea of his destiny. The Man, the State and Citizenship are existent as before, but with how changed relations to each other and for how different purposes. Then Citizenship was the low aim of life, and the State was before the Individual, receiving his affections, expecting his services, and governing his duties. Now, the Individual is before the State, and is bound by an immutable law to serve his Divine Master with a perfect obedience. Man is elevated to a higher existence, requiring more exalted duties and ending in a more glorious future; but the State and Citizenship are dethroned. Instead of being ends, they are but means—means to develop what they anciently destroyed, means to “secure the highest possible development of Humanity in this world and for the world to come.” Such is the purpose, the animating spirit, the pervading genius of American Institutions—the Improvement of Man, the Regeneration of Man, the Immortalization of Man—these three grand thoughts being the concentrated utterance of the sixty centuries of mockings, imprisonments, scourgings, and martyrdoms which our Race has lingeringly, sometimes restlessly, and always agonizingly endured. An aim which would require for its fitting portrayal, a heart of



gentlest purity, a brain of highest gifts, a tongue of intensest brilliancy of flame.

The education of man here to fit him for the presence of his God. Such is the exalted, the inspiring mission of America—not the mere intellectual development, but with it the moral, that seeing the Right, Man may know it, do it, and glorify his Maker. Man needs such a government, such a friend, such a teacher. For centuries, he has been defiled, bruised, marred by harsh and cruel treatment. His dignity has been disregarded. His rights have been denied. His faculties have been stupefied. His Divinely-given powers have been undeveloped. His spiritual nature has been but feebly enlightened. He has been chained in ignorance, vice and superstition. Church and State have conspired to rob him. The one has refused him happiness here or hereafter, except upon conditions its hypocritical priests imposed. And the other has prohibited the enjoyment of his inherent rights, that the purposes of designing knaves might be accomplished. Thus for centuries has it been. But it continues so no longer. *Here*, a beginning—a bold, promising beginning in Man's complete emancipation has been made. Among Americans, has this great work been almost exclusively commenced. To us, has been offered the honorable privilege of participating in the keen pleasure it promises, in the exceeding honor its fulfilment will involve. Let us gladly, but thoughtfully, accept the position assigned us. Let us seek to fearlessly perform the duty devolved upon us. Let us prove worthy of the singular distinction. Let us work, with tireless hands, with exhaustless energy in the noble cause. Let us labor to check the universal tendency of our depraved nature to outrage the dependent and defraud the unprotected. Let us aim to cultivate among all, a high-toned morality which, without other than an inherent compulsion, will promptly yield to each his rightful demands. Let us resist all organized systems of corrupting the public, by vitiating their morals, exciting their passions, or dethroning their reason by inflaming their brains. Let us seek to diffuse among the people the blessings of an

education for mind and heart, which, teaching men their duties, their powers, their rights and their destiny, will make it impossible for others to become masters or themselves slaves. And, with this great purpose in view, let us support, guard from mutilation, and assist to increased development the Common School system of our State. Let us try to improve ourselves, do good to others, and thereby carry out, at once, the sublime injunction of the Bible and the beautiful theory of our government. Let us assist in filling the great wants of the Country and the Age, that, with Editors more independent our newspapers may be more reliable; with a populace more intelligent and more virtuous, our Fathers may be more domestic in their habits, and our Mothers less frivolous in their conduct; with teachers more faithful, our youths may be better trained; with tradesmen more honest our purchases may be more secure; with politicians more honorable, our politics may be less offensive; with statesmen more moral and less rash, our National Policy may be, in many things, less indefensible; with legislators less corrupt, our legislation may be more reputable; with a judiciary less innovating and more Freedom-loving our rights may be more stable and our Courts saved from becoming outposts of Tyranny; with a Bar more conscientious, guilt may be more surely punished and innocence more securely shielded; and that with a Clergy more earnest, more courageous, more radical and less temporizing, we may have a Church more pure, more spiritual, more vitalizing and more scriptural. And, finally, let us pray for the universal prevalence of our Holy Religion, to the end that all unnatural distinctions between men may be leveled, that virtuous principles may be strengthened, that the Right may be advanced, and that the world may be improved, progressed, converted. Having done this, having given of our thought, our prayers and our labor to the cause of INDIVIDUALISM, we may justly feel as if we had not failed in our duty to God the Creator, or to Man the Creature; and we may, with confidence commit the issue to the Wise Disposer of Events, "who doeth all things well."

